

Wake County Natural Areas Inventory

SITES OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

A number of sites in the county contain features of some biological significance that are worthy of protection. However, such features are generally represented elsewhere in Wake County by better examples (i.e., have County significance or greater), such as more extensive acreage of upland hardwood forests or higher quality bottomlands with fewer exotic plants. These sites merit protection by local town/city governments, perhaps by the county government, and perhaps by TLC. The sites below are listed geographically, mainly by watershed, in order to group sites of similar ownership or habitats. This listing represents only those sites with a moderate amount of information available to NC NHP, and certainly many other sites in the county would merit Local significance. General locations are shown on Figure 6.

A. Purnell Road Forest, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, consists of a series of mainly east-west and northeast-southwest ridges near the northern shore of Falls Lake. Dry-Mesic Oak-Hickory Forest and Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest are prevalent. Umbrella magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*) is a conspicuous component of the slopes. Locally uncommon plants include mountain holly (*Ilex montana*), southern wood violet (*Viola hirsutula*), and ground pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*).

B. Old NC 98 Peninsula, also owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, lies on a west-pointing peninsula at Falls Lake; formerly NC 98 ran along the upper portion of the peninsula (prior to flooding of the lake). There are several mature hardwood stands toward the tip of the peninsula, with species such as umbrella magnolia and hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*) in the understory. A pair of ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) nests on a platform in the lake near the peninsula.

C. Lower Barton Creek Ultramafic Slopes is a relatively small site (about 75 acres in 1987) on private land that is now completely surrounded by housing developments. Located a mile east of Creedmoor Road (NC 50), these slopes lie along an ultramafic ridge with rich slopes. Locally scarce herbs within the hardwood forest include doll's-eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*), shinleaf (*Pyrola rotundifolia*), and halberd-leaved violet (*Viola hastata*). The site was not visited in the current inventory, and thus its status is uncertain.

D. Harris Creek Granitic Flatrocks contains a fairly large (1-2 acres) flatrock lying east of Harris Creek, several miles south of Rolesville. This privately-owned site contains a wide array of granitic flatrock species in a remote setting (away from trash-dumping), but no site visit has taken place in summer to determine if the rare Small's portulaca (*Portulaca smallii*) is present. The adjacent woodland contains locally uncommon fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*). The site was not visited in the current inventory.

E. Durant Nature Park is owned and managed by the City of Raleigh, along the northeastern edge of the city. Most of the park consists of mixed forests and two small man-made lakes;